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A K. P. O'Connell (R.)

# LETTER

TO A

MEMBER of PARLIAMENT,

COMPLAINING

Of some PUBLIC GRIEVANCES, relating to the  
Kingdom in general, and this City in particular.

WITH

Proper SCHEMES for redressing them;

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*By a Lover of his Country.*

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D U B L I N.

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LETTER

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

CONTAINING

OF THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PAPERS  
OF THE HON. THE MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

1845

FROM THE HOUSE OF COMMONS



BY THE

PRINTED BY THE AUTHOR

(LONDON)



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A  
LETTER, &c.

S I R,

**A**S Mankind are linked in a Chain of Dependence one upon another; it is the Duty of every Individual, to study, and consult the Good of the Whole, as far as their Capacity will allow them. This Duty, in respect to Temporal Affairs, is comprehended under four Heads; the first, or nearest Link of this Chain, is self-preservation, or the Regards that are due to our particular Families. The second, is the Interest, or Welfare of the Society of which we are immediate Members. The third, is the general Emolument of that Kingdom, in which we live, and are supported. The fourth, includes the universal Good of Mankind. As the latter is of too extensive a Nature for me to engage in, I shall confine myself to the three former, and use my best Endeavours, to make them co-operate, one with another.

My Intention in this little Essay, or Remonstrance, is, to set forth several *Grievances*, and *Disadvantages*, this City, in particular, and the Kingdom, in general, labour under; which loudly call for *Redress* from the *Higher Powers*, and which might easily be removed, without  
doing

doing the least Violence to our *Happy Constitution*.

Before I proceed, it will be expected, agreeable to the above Maxims, that I should first consider the nearest Part of that social Tye, that unites us to each other; accordingly, I must beg leave to observe, that in some of the Schemes, hereafter to be proposed, I expect to bear a small Part in the Profits, and Advantages, arising from them to the Public; which, I humbly presume, will not take from the Merit of the Proposer; For I have no Notion of carrying *Patriotism* to such a romantic Height, or enthusiastic Madness, as to neglect myself entirely for the Public Good: Unless it could not be obtained otherwise.

After premising so much for my self; the next thing I must naturally have at Heart, is the Interest, and Welfare of this City, in which I have spent the greatest Part of my *Life*, and *Fortune* — The first, and most general, Grievance, to be taken under Consideration, is the Work-house; which, however well intended, by no means answers the pious, and charitable Design of it; for notwithstanding there is a double Tax laid on the Inhabitants, one for Street Beggars, and another for helpless Children; yet the Number of both do not seem to be lessen'd, but continue as great a *Burthen* to the Publick as ever.

How this comes to pass, notwithstanding the *considerable Revenues* to support it, is, I believe, to every thinking Person, the greatest Mystery,  
(whatever



(whatever Specious Pretences may be made) considering the poor Diet the Children have, and their close Application to such Business as is Suitable to their several Ages. Notwithstanding all this, I am informed by one of the *Governors*, they are £1500 in Debt, which, in all probability, will give rise to a *new Tax*.

The only Expedient, in my humble Opinion to remedy this great Hardship, is, for the *Parliament* to appoint some Person of *Ingenuity*, and *Integrity*, to superintend and conduct the whole; itill Subject to the Inspection of the Appointed *Governors*. Such a Man would make it his study, to find out particular Employments for the *Lame*, the *Blind*, &c.

Tho' long Habits of Idleness, might at first make any kind of Industry uneasy to them; yet, in a little time, they would be reconciled to it; and think themselves unhappy, if they had not some Business to employ them. This is evident, from those who have accustomed themselves to Labour and Industry; such People could have no Enjoyment of their Lives, in an idle inactive Life. By the above Method we should not have one useless Member in the *Community*, except Infants, Superannuated Persons, or those who were afflicted with bodily Disorders, that would render them incapable of doing any Thing. As there are *Hospitals* sufficient for the latter; I am pretty well convinced, the *Work-house*, if rightly managed, would fully answer the two Former.

Perhaps it might be thought Vanity, or presumption in me, to imagine that I could effect  
so

so good a Work, if I had the intire Management of that Place: And tho' I should engage, not only, to support the *Number* that now is, or at any Time past, has been in it; and likewise all the Beggars that belong to the respective Parishes in this City; yet, it is to be supposed, such a Proposal, however conducive to the Good of Society, would meet with Opposition, in the same Manner, as a Proposal was rejected by the *Aldermen*, for raising the *Tolls* of the City; which might, as I am very well informed, be set at double, perhaps treble, what they now bring in; had they been disposed of by *Auction*, or otherwise, to the fairest Bidders.

—But in all *Publick Trusts*, where there are a considerable Number of *Rulers* or *Governors*, there will always be some Few, of a more active, or *Selfish Nature* than the Rest; who manage, and conduct every thing as they think proper—such *acting Trustees*, generally provide for their *Minions* and *Creatures*; whose Interest they consider more than the *Public Good*. But as the Proposal, I first mentioned, will be a *Touch stone* to try the Integrity of the *Managers*; I shall set it in such a Light, as not to admit of any reasonable Objection.

The first thing that may be urged against it, is, that so extensive an undertaking could not be conducted by one Man, without many Assistants, and Advisers, to which I agree; for in the Multiplicity of Councillors there is safety, provided they have an experimental Knowledge of the Schemes proposed; otherwise their

Consultations



Consultations will avail but little. For which Reason, I would consult *Artificers* and *Tradesmen* upon this Occasion, in order to employ the Poor, who were capable of bodily Labour, to the best Advantage. Besides, where there are a great many *Managers* in any Affair, that is not attended with *particular Profits* or *Advantages*, no Man will give himself much Trouble about it, since all the Rest must equally share in the Credit, and Reputation, that may attend his Endeavours.

It is a Common, tho' true, saying; *what is every Man's Business, properly belongs to no one.* Upon this Presumption bad Men will take what Advantages they can; and as there was a *Judas* found among the *twelve Apostles*; it may very reasonably be supposed, there are some of the same Stamp among the *Governors* who are appointed for this good Work.

By what I have already said, I believe, every thinking unprejudiced Person will allow, that the *Work-house* would be much better managed than it is, under the sole Conduct of one Person; provided he was properly Qualifyed for such an Undertaking; not that I would add an *Additional Officer*, to pamper himself with what was intended for the *Poor*, as I think there is, already, too much of their Property disposed of that Way.—What I propose, would be to free the Streets of this City from the importunate Cries of their own Poor, and to make the Rest return to their *respective Parishes*, or send them to *Bridewell*. And the only Reward I should desire

fire for my Trouble, would be the remaining Part of the Revenues (if any) appointed for that Purpose.

To this Proposal no one can object! but the Question may be asked, What Assurance is there of your Performing what you propose? To which I answer, no other Assurance, but an Engagement to use my utmost Endeavours to effect it. This must naturally be expected; as I can't, otherwise expect any Profit or Advantage to myself.

Another Objection may be raised, is the danger of applying or imbezling the *Revenues* of that House, to obviate which, I should propose either to give security for my faithful Discharge of that Trust; or to let such Treasurer, as the *Governors* are pleased to appoint, receive the Money, and see it laid out agreeable to the Design proposed.

But say they; how is it possible that a Man who has mismanaged his own *Fortune*, could think of laying out a *Publick Fund* to the best Advantage? To this I answer; that those who have been extravagant, when they begin to reflect upon their Follies and misconduct in Life, generally become the best Managers, as they know how to guard against the Wiles, and Artifices of designing People, much better than such as never suffered in that Manner. Besides, there are several, who might make free with their *Fortunes*; yet would not, for any Consideration, injure the *Community*, or any other *Individual* thereof;



thereof; among which Number, I presume, my greatest Enemies will allow me to be ranked.

It may be expected here Sir, that I should lay down a probable scheme, to make the *Work-house* answer the intended Design; but as it would be too tedious to enter into Particulars, I shall refer them, till I am called upon by the higher Powers; and only observe in general, that if the management of that House was in my Power, I would make those idle Drones, who depend upon the Honey of the Industrious Bee, at least Support themselves; by finding out Employments for them, suitable to their several Powers, and Capacities. It is incredible to think what the Blind are capable of doing, by a proper, and close Application: I was informed by a Gentleman of Credit, that he knew a blind Man could finish any piece of Carpenters Work with as much exactness as those who can see. But while such seeming Objects of Charity can Support themselves, by moving the Compassion of their fellow Creatures, they seldom or ever will apply themselves to any bodily Labour.

There is another Grievance, which seems to bear hard upon the poor *Housekeepers* of Dublin; and which, it is humbly to be hoped, the *Parliament* will please to take into their Consideration. Every *House-keeper* is obliged to keep the *Pavements*, that belong to their respective Holdings in repair; and the Taxes of those Vehicles which occasion such Breaches are applied to the *Work-house*—whereas in my humble Opinion, they might be applied in repairing the Damages occasioned by them, and an Equivalent layed

layed on the Gentlemens Coaches. Tho' I gave myself as an Instance, in one of my former Papers, in how *unequal* a manner we were taxed for the support of the *Poor*, yet I must beg Leave once more to observe, that notwithstanding I pay 19 s. *per Annum*, in that manner, for an old House; I am likewise obliged to keep 30 or 40 Yards of Pavement in Repair, for all those who are pleased to tear it up, with their *Vehicles* of *Pleasure*, or *Profit*; tho' I have nothing of my own to injure it.

To the above Proposal it may be objected; that there is a general Tax already layed on Gentlemens Coaches, &c. for the Public use. To which I answer; that the additional Tax proposed, should only affect those who reside in *Dublin*: by this means, *Charity* would be a little more proportioned, to the Circumstances of the Inhabitants.

Having said enough concerning those two *Grievances*, which affect the *Society*, of which Providence has made me a Member; I shall beg leave to trouble you with another *Grievance*, of a more extensive Nature; which is of the greatest Consequence to this Kingdom in general.

As *Ireland* abounds with *Bogs*, more, in proportion, than any other part of the habitable World; it will not be improper to enquire into the Reason of it; for by Discovering the *Cause*, and removing it, the *Effect* must cease. I don't intend here to enter into the Original Cause of *Bogs*, (that being already Sufficiently discovered) but endeavour to find out the Reason, why such



such *Tracts* of *Barren Lands* lie uncultivated, in the midst of a well inhabited Country. : Some may, perhaps, imagine it is owing to the want of *Industry* : but upon due *Consideration*, the true Reason will be found to proceed from another Cause. In *England*, and, I believe, in all other Parts of *Europe*, except this *Kingdom*, all Landlords are unlimited, as to time, in setting their Lands; whereas a Custom particularly prevails here, to tyce up Gentlemens Hands from giving Leases for any longer Terms, than 21 or 30 Years. As for a Lease of Three Lives, it is so uncertain a Tenure, that no Prudent Person wou'd venture any part of his Substance upon it. 'Tis true, some unthinking People, who don't consider *Consequences*, or the Advantages of their *Posterity*, may be induc'd to venture a Part of their Fortune or Industry, upon such Terms; notwithstanding their Families have often suffer'd by it; as Landlords never consider, at the expiration of their Leases, the Nature of the Land when they, or their Predecessors, first possess'd it; and must either pay the full value for their own *Improvements*; or, contrary to the *Law of Nature*, let others enjoy the Fruits of their *Industry*. Our valuable Neighbours the *English*, (whom we have always copied after, and who are worthy of Imitation) wou'd look upon such Treatment, as the greatest act of *Injustice* and *Cruelty*. If *Conscience* will not oblige us to follow their good Examples, (from whom the most of those

who

Who enjoy Estates descended) Self-Interest surely will : Therefore I shall endeavour to prove, it is not only the particular *Interest* of every Landlord, to grant Leases for ever of his Estate; but also a very great *Advantage* to the *Publick*; and the greatest *Security* we can have for our HAPPY CONSTITUTION.

First, That the Landlord will find his Advantage in it, is very obvious. For when a Tenant has a short, or an uncertain Time of his Farm, he can't manage it to the best Advantage, to enable him to answer his Landlord's Demand; but makes it his only Study how to impoverish it; which proves prejudicial to both: for while the Tenant is endeavouring to take all the Substance he can, out of the Ground; he sometimes finds his *increase* very little more than his *seed*; So that he scarcely will have any thing out of it, to pay his Rent; or counter-balance his expence and Labour: The consequence of which, is too obvious to mention. As it must not only prove a Loss to the Tenant and consequently to the Landlord, but also to the Publick in General. Whereas had the Lessee been sure of it for ever; he would undoubtedly have made it better every Year, till at last it would become a *certain* Rent; by which means the intrinsic value of it, would be Five Years Purchase more, than it was worth at first: for an Estate of 100*l.* per *Annum* certain, is better than 125*l.* per *Annum* uncertain. What probably ruins most *Estated Gentlemen*, is a desire of swelling their Rent-roll, and living



living up to it: The consequence of which is, that their Tenants, for the reasons before mention'd, not being able to answer their Demands, they are oblig'd to borrow Money upon Interest, to discharge the little Debts they contracted with Tradesmen and others; which, like a Cancer, will at last consume the whole; unless they appear in a different light from what they first set out in, which seldom is the Case, while they have any *Credit* left.

If the above Self-Considerations (beside the *Credit*, and Satisfaction of seeing Tenants in a prosperous and thriving way) are not of weight enough, to destroy that *Injurious Clause* in *Wills*, and *Marriage Settlements*; of limiting Gentlemen, in setting long Leases of their Estates, at an improved Rent; (especially as Lands are at so great a Value, and as likely to fall as rise) I say, if the desire of *Tyrannizing* over *Tenants*, and of keeping them always in a state of *Slavery* and *Dependance*, will counterballance every other consideration, in respect to the Lands in general; yet certainly, every Gentleman, who has any Quantity of *unprofitable Lands*, on his Estate, wou'd gladly have it in his Power to encourage those who wou'd undertake to reclaim them. This cannot be effected without the interposition of the *Parliament*, in favour of those who are under any restrictions by *Settlements* or otherwise.

To shew the absolute necessity of such an unlimited Power, it is necessary to observe; that there are very few Bogs of any considerable extent,

extent, that are not surrounded by Lands that belong to different Proprietors, who have, each of them, a proportionable Right to such Bogs, or Commons. One of them may, perhaps be a Tenant in Fee, the Second a Tenant in Tail, and the Third a Minor: therefore as it is absolutely necessary in reclaiming of any Bog, to have it intirely in the Power of the Undertaker; particularly in the Method I have discovered; it is to be hop'd, the Parliament will remove all Obstacles, that may lye in the way of so useful an Undertaking, and which have hinder'd me many Years ago from engaging in that Scheme.

There may be an Objection in regard to Minors; that it wou'd be hard to deprive them of any part of their Property; but when duely consider'd, it wou'd rather be adding to it: And in order to prevent designing Guardians from taking any Advantage of Minors in setting long Leases of Lands, I mean, of such as never were measur'd in with other Lands to Tenants, or that were not worth above 18*d.* or 2*s.* per Acre; it wou'd be necessary such Guardians shou'd set them, in the most Public Manner, to the fairest Bidders. In that Case, Minors can't possibly have any Injustice done to them; but, on the contrary, when they come of Age, will have the pleasure of seeing very great Nuisances, chang'd into both a public and private Good.

There is one Difficulty more, which seems to obstruct this useful Undertaking; and that is, when such Lands are demised to Tenants, who



Who will neither improve them themselves, nor permit others to do it. In that Case, the Laws of the Land shou'd compell them to do either one or the other; still with a Provision, that they shall be no Sufferers by it.

As it is demonstrably evident that long Leases of Lands, but particularly of such as I have last mention'd, wou'd be greatly advantageous, not only to Landlords and their Tenants, but to the Public in General; I believe every thinking Person will allow, that they likewise wou'd be one of the strongest Bulwarks we cou'd possibly have, for our present *happy Establishment*: for Tenants then, having something to lose, that might be a lasting Support to their Families, wou'd exert themselves with double *vigour* and *Resolution*, upon any Occasion that seem'd to threaten it with Danger; and such of them who were *Enemies* to our *Glorious Constitution*, wou'd be very Cautious how they encourag'd any attempts to destroy it as their Properties cou'd not be easily convey'd to *foreign Countries*.

There might be a great deal more said to enforce what I have here offer'd, but hope the Parliament will think, what has been already mention'd, of such Consequence, as will induce them to take those Grievances into their Consideration; notwithstanding any mistaken prejudice, that may be conceiv'd against the Proposer; as Misrepresentations in Life are too common. I can't help observing here how ungenerous, and ingrateful it is to turn Projectors  
into

Into Ridicule, as the Rise and Progress of all Arts, and Sciences, are owing to Men of that turn of Genius; the Reason of which is, that the Injudicious, and unthinking part of Mankind always judge of Things from Consequences, therefore immediately conclude every Person a Fool or a Madman, who unsuccessfully deviates from the beaten Road; tho' it is a known Truth, that the best concerted Schemes are generally frustrated by some unforeseen Events which Human Fallibility will always be liable to.

I am, Sir, &c.

**RICHARD POEKRRICH**

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